

## **Cross Party Group on Deaf Issues | Minutes**

*Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, 14:00 – Via Zoom*

### **Attendees**

**Mark Isherwood MS** – Chair

**Joel James MS**

**Callum Mclean** – Secretariat, Wales Council for Deaf People

**Alison Bryan**

**Angharad Morris**

**Annie Morris** – Audiology Relationship Manager, Specsavers

**Dawn Sommerlad** – Teacher of the Deaf / COS Trustee

**George Baldwin** – Policy & Campaign Officer, NDCS

**Gordon Harrison** – Head of Professional Advancement, Specsavers

**Jane Wild** – BC UHB Audiology

**John Day** - BC UHB Audiology

**Louise Sweeney** – CEO, Wales Council for Deaf People

**Michael Britland** - Training and Development Manager - Hearing Link Services

**Nigel Williams** – South Wales Cochlear Implant Support Group

**Rob Wilks** – Lecturer, Cardiff University

**Sarah Angove** – BATOD Cymru

**Sarah Thomas** – COS

**Sophie Brownlee** – Account Director, Specsavers

**Stephen Brattan-Wilson** – ASLI Representative / BSL Interpreter

**Stephen McAndrew** – Director of NHS Services, Specsavers

### **Apologies**

**Anthony Evans** – BSL Interpreter / member of NRCPD

**Cathie Robins Talbot**

**Hannah Winters** – Audiology, Cardiff & Vale UHB

**Jacqui Bond** – Social Worker

**Julia Terry** – Swansea University

**Paul Chappell** – Locations Manager Wales, RNID

**Peredur Owen Griffiths MS**

**Rhun Ap Iwerth MS**

**Robin Ash** – BSL Equality & Rights Co-ordinator, BDA

**Stuart Parkinson** - Vice Chair/Researcher and Development Officer, ABSLTA

### **Communication Support**

**Rachel Williams** – BSL interpreter

**Liana Lloyd** – BSL Interpreter

**Hilary Maclean** – Speech to Text Reporter

### **Introduction & Apologies**

**Chair** Welcomed everyone to the meeting, and read the apologies

### Matters Arising

**Callum** discussed the letters that were sent to Audiology departments a few meetings ago, regarding implementation of the Framework of Action for Wales for people who are D/deaf or living with hearing loss now that we have received responses from Hywel Dda, Cwm Taf & Aneurin Bevan Health Boards, which were shared with the group when the responses were received

### 2021/22 AGM & Sharing of Annual Report

**Joel James** nominated Mark as the next Chair, and as he was the only Senedd member in attendance, it was seconded by **John Day**. No other nominees were noted.

**Callum** was the only nominee for Secretary, which was proposed by **George Baldwin**, seconded and thirded by **Nigel Williams & John Day** respectively.

#### *Actions from agenda item*

- *Circulate AGM report to members*

### Primary Care Audiology

**John** discussed the proposed system in Wales, in which advance practice Audiologists deliver care in Primary Care settings as the first point of contact, rather than initially seeing a GP, they will see an Audiologist, which John wishes to roll out in all other areas where this is currently not the procedure. Currently 50% of Wales uses this procedure. John also noted his appreciation in the group for sending the letters to the four Health Boards bringing attention to this. **John** recommended that we come back to this in a future meeting to see what has changed or if further action needs to be taken from the group, as the Health Boards will need time to implement these changes in the first place.

#### *Actions from agenda item*

- *Primary Care Audiology to be an agenda item for the second meeting of 2023*

### Specsavers Committee Evidence

**Stephen M.** shared a presentation with the group detailing their hearing loss services, and the needs of adults with age related hearing loss. They note that their services are available on the high street, which can alleviate pressure from A&E and GP practices. It was also mentioned that Specsavers provide hearing loss services to Primary Care as contractors in England.

Statistics were shared regarding the growing rate of wait times in Audiology services as well as the higher number of older people with a hearing loss over prior years.

**Annie** added that they offer both wax and hearing tests in store as well as individual management plans for patients.

The Social Model approach versus the Medical Model of disability was also discussed between members of Specsavers and those in the NHS/ Teacher of the Deaf roles as well as Deaf individuals.

**Alison** questioned the usage of the word “correctable” when referring to hearing loss which was used in the presentation which **Rob** agreed

**Stephen M** responded stating that their role is narrowly defined and does not specifically reflect the needs of Deaf people as they are primarily focused on adults with age related hearing loss, and they

are aware that their model is focused on this. He also invited anyone to get in touch with him over email if they have any specific examples or concerns regarding Audiologists within Specsavers.

### ALN Reforms & Communication Standards in Health Care

**George** discussed the ALN Reforms, firstly noting that the number of Deaf learners in school registered as having special education needs or additional learning needs support has declined in 2022. The NDCS has varied views on why this is the case, and added that the Senedd's education Committee has also reached out to them as they are also concerned about the low number. George said he and the NDCS will be looking into the matter and will possibly ask the Chair to take an action if required once George has been in touch with him directly with an update later on.

**George** then informed the group of a campaign led by RNIB, RNID and the NDCS, regarding the All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss, where there are no accountability or monitoring mechanisms in place to track progress and highlight areas of concern. George noted that the Welsh Government's response is not satisfactory for the groups involved in the campaign, which are still uncertain as to why. The Chair noted that he has already contacted the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding this, shared her response with RNIB Cymru and RNID in Wales, and received a reply from them detailing the points they would like him to pursue with the Minister. The Chair stated that he is seeking an opportunity to raise this in the Chamber when possible.

### Deaf education in Scotland & Wales ([Blog, report & summary here](#))

**Rob** introduced himself and discussed the comparison of the BSL Act in Scotland and its impact in education with the situation in Wales, as he had been working with the University of Edinburgh as well as civil servants. This involved interviews and research over a three month period, checking the available provisions and posting their findings in the blog linked above with regards to this, as well as how BSL is used in schools and how it is treated as a language, and the medical versus social model of disability and how this affects education.

**Sarah** added that many Teachers of the Deaf are first or second language BSL users who have high levels of BSL and that this goes against some figures Rob has in relation to BSL qualifications of Teachers of the Deaf and how these are enforced. She then recommended Rob contacted BATOD Cymru to discuss further and possibly provide further statistics.

*Actions from agenda item:*

- *Letter to Jane Hutt & Jeremy Miles regarding the BSL provision/ Rob's report inviting a response - on behalf of the group with drafting support from Rob*

*\*The final agenda item was a question from Anthony Evans which was answered over email before the meeting began and was shared with the group from there and not discussed at length during the meeting itself due to time constraints*

*The meeting was then concluded.*